



## AAC Publications

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### **SUDDEN FATAL CARDIAC ARREST**

Alaska, Denali National Park, Denali, West Buttress Route

**On June 3 at 5:42 p.m. NPS rangers at 14,200-foot camp received a call requesting assistance from a guided team on the summit ridge of Denali.** The guide stated that one of their clients was “unresponsive, apneic, and pulseless.” The 48-year-old male climber had fallen and was arrested by the rest of his team. When guides arrived at the patient’s location, he was unresponsive. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was initiated, but after more than 30 minutes of sustained basic life support measures without return of spontaneous circulation, and in accordance with medical protocols, CPR was halted by the guides at 6:10 p.m. The patient was recovered by the NPS helicopter later that evening.

### **ANALYSIS**

This incident was both unfortunate and unexpected. This climber’s team demonstrated heroic efforts, with textbook basic life support (BLS) measures in an extremely challenging environment. The rescue response illustrates the difficulty of rendering meaningful medical interventions in remote and austere mountain environments, such as the Alaska Range. BLS equipment and treatments that may be effective and available in urban environments are often out of reach in mountaineering destinations. (Source: Denali Mountaineering Rangers.)

**Images**

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